

Act 1: Sexual Violence Prevention Guidance for Community Prevention Practitioners



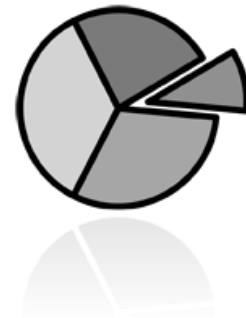
Act 1 provides Vermont prevention practitioners with the opportunity to work together to support understanding and implementation of comprehensive sexual violence prevention in school communities. **The pieces of Act 1 which pertain to schools cannot be fulfilled by any one single training or provider.** We must work together.

To support our collective efforts, the ***Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force (SVPTF)*** created the following guidance and recommendations for prevention practitioners providing Act 1 technical assistance and education. We recommend that you incorporate these recommendations in any sexual abuse/violence prevention education you provide in the context of Act 1 in schools, licensed child care facilities and youth serving organizations.

***Thank you for being part of Vermont's effort
to prevent child sexual abuse and sexual violence.***

The Prevention Pie

- We are each a piece of Vermont's prevention pie and can work together to support comprehensive assistance for schools. **Collaboration is the key to success.** Partner with other practitioners that work in your community.
- One training or program can address only one or two pieces of the legislative requirements. **Refer to the section of legislation your materials, programs, or activities support** (see Legislative Overview Section below).
- **There are no approved or endorsed Act 1 trainings.** There is no process for endorsement.



➤ ***Act 1 has provided three "go to" support resources:***

- ❖ The **Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG)** for school communities K-12 incorporating sexual violence prevention into the health education curriculum:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_health_ed/publications_resources/educ_health_ed_TARG.pdf

- ❖ **Step Up: Protect children from sexual abuse** prevention guide:
<http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/pdf/protectkids/GuideforParents.pdf>
- ❖ **Commit to Kids**, a step-by-step plan to help prevent sexual abuse from happening within child-serving organizations, from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. Contact Priscilla White at DCF for more information on the VT Edition: Priscilla.White@state.vt.us

ACT 1 Legislative Overview for Schools and Child Care Providers

While only K-12 schools are required to provide sexual violence prevention in health education, both schools *and* licensed child care facilities are required to train adult employees. Schools must also provide information to adults and parents in the community. Below is a brief overview of Act 1 legislation.

- You may find the full Act 1/ S.13 bill here:
<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2010/Acts/Act001.pdf>
- And Act 156 here: <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2012/Acts/ACT156.pdf>

Act 1: Sexual Violence Prevention Section 3:

Educating children about sexual abuse and sexual violence

<i>Legislation</i>	<i>Effective</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Sec. 3 16 V.S.A. §131 All Vermont schools are required to provide instruction about; How to recognize and prevent sexual abuse and sexual violence, including developmentally appropriate instruction about promoting healthy and respectful relationships, developing and maintaining effective communication with trusted adults, recognizing sexually offending behaviors, and gaining awareness of available school and community resources.	July 1, 2011	The Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG) for school communities K-12 incorporating sexual violence prevention into the health education curriculum.
Sec. 3 16 V.S.A. § 131 amended Act 1 to include: An employee of the school shall be in the room during the provision of all instruction or information presented under this supervision.	July 1, 2012	

Act 1: Sexual Violence Prevention Sections 9 & 10:
Educating staff and volunteers about child sexual abuse and sexual violence

<i>Legislation</i>	<i>Effective</i>	<i>Resources</i>
<p>Sec. 9 16 V.S.A. §563 The school board of a school district shall ensure that adults employed in the schools maintained by the district receive orientation, information, or instruction on the prevention, identification, and reporting of child sexual abuse, as defined in subdivision 4912(8) of Title 33, and sexual violence. This shall include information regarding the signs and symptoms of sexual abuse, sexual violence, grooming processes, recognizing the dangers of child sexual abuse in and close to the home, and other predatory behaviors of sex offenders.</p> <p>The school board shall also provide opportunities for parents, guardians, and other interested persons to receive the same information. The department of education and the agency of human services shall provide materials and technical support to any school board that requests assistance in implementing this section.</p>	July 1, 2011	<p>Commit to Kids Program</p> <p>Step Up: Protect children from sexual abuse</p> <p>Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG)</p> <p>Contact DCF for information on mandated reporting</p>
<p>Sec. 10 33 V.S.A. §3502 (2) A licensed child care facility shall ensure that all individuals working at the facility receive orientation, based on materials recommended by the agency of human services and the department of education, on the prevention, identification, and mandatory reporting of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, signs and symptoms of sexual abuse, sexual violence, grooming processes, recognizing the dangers of child sexual abuse in and close to the home, and other predatory behaviors of sex offenders.</p>	July 1, 2011	<p>Commit to Kids Program</p> <p>Step Up: Protect children from sexual abuse</p> <p>Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG)</p>

Current Best Practice in Prevention

There is a lot of information around what makes prevention effective, and many different approaches. The Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force (SVPTF) created the TARG, in conjunction with Commit to Kids, to help create consistent language and identify best practice approaches in Vermont. Referencing the TARG and other support materials around Act 1 will

continue to build community knowledge and build effective and sustainable prevention efforts.

The SVPTF recommends:

- **Identifying which prevention theories your prevention programs incorporate.** The TARG highlights best practice prevention theories in Chapter 2 including working across the *Social Ecological Model* (Pg. 15) and the *Nine Principles of Effective Prevention* (Pg. 17). Prevention activities that consider these and other prevention theories will have higher rates of success and sustainability.
- **Highlighting which of the grade expectations your youth targeted prevention activities address.** Chapter 3 of the TARG provides information on developmentally appropriate skills, knowledge and concepts aligned with Vermont's Health Education Grade Expectations.
- We all have limited resources and capacity but **devoting time to planning and evaluation will help strengthen our prevention programs and assess efficacy.** Chapters 4 and 5 of the TARG give tools and guidance around planning for prevention activities including thinking about cultural relevancy, community readiness, and evaluation planning.
- **Working with schools and child care facilities to review policies and procedures.** Having adequate policies and practices in place is a critical component of effective protective environments. Introducing prevention efforts often leads to increased disclosures and identification of possible abuse. It is important to make sure that the schools and child care facilities we work with are ready to respond effectively. Resources for this include Appendix D of the TARG and Chapter 8 of *The Commit to Kids Program*. Chapter 2 of the *Commit to Kids Program* addresses responding to disclosures.

Collaboration

Community providers can take steps to promote and support comprehensive, coordinated approaches to Act 1: Sexual Violence Prevention.

When working with schools:

- ✓ **Encourage coordination within the school.** Assist schools in initiating/continuing a conversation with educators, administrators, and support staff to make sure everyone is talking to each other:
 - Ask if there is an Act 1 team or group of individuals working on sexual abuse prevention in the school.
 - Meet with the team or group to hear about and/or help develop a plan.
- ✓ **Ask the school if they are working with other community organizations and what types of support they have received.**

- ✓ **Find out what sexual abuse prevention is already in place** and what is in need of more support.
- ✓ **Clarify the type of support they are seeking.** “Act 1 Support” is very broad, review the different sections of the mandate and be clear about the specific support your organization can provide.
 - There are many parts of the legislation so general language like “Act 1 Training” may confuse schools and limit a comprehensive response. Highlight the specific components of Act 1 that your program addresses.

When working with other community providers:

- ✓ **Recognize your organization’s capacity.** What are the limits of what you can offer and who can help to fill in the gaps?
- ✓ If multiple organizations are working in a school community, **establish coordination meetings in which everyone is at the table to develop a comprehensive and consistent approach.**
- ✓ **Invite partners to events and trainings when possible.** Developing a shared understanding of each other’s work and sharing perspectives will help link our work together and create clear and consistent messages for the youth and adults in our communities.

Reporting Child Abuse

To report abuse, call the Department for Children and Families at 1-800-649-5285, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. DCF is the State Agency responsible for child safety and assessing or investigating abuse.

- You can make a report even if you are not a mandated reporter
- While schools are the required reporting entities, we encourage mandated and non-mandated prevention practitioners that hear disclosures to make their own report to DCF.
- If you are not sure whether what you suspect is abuse, call DCF for advice
- Call if you suspect abuse. You don’t need proof, only suspicion.
- If you are a mandated reporter, reports must be made within 24 hours of your becoming aware
- Reporting matters! It facilitates an assessment of a child’s safety
- The Department for Children and Families is the best resource for education and information about mandated reporting. Contact the local DCF Office to request a presentation. For a list of DCF offices go to dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/contact_us.

For technical assistance or more information:

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